

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
PROUDLY SERVING AMERICA'S VETERANS



Draft legislation, to Prohibit Smoking in Any VHA Facility

Background:

According to VA, only 20 percent of veterans enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) are smokers. Many non-smoking veteran patients are at an increased risk for cardiovascular events associated with exposure to secondhand smoke.

The VHA currently provides 971 outdoor designated smoking areas and 15 indoor designated smoking areas, as required by the [Veterans Health Care Act of 1992](#).

In contrast, smoking is prohibited in non-VA federal facilities, indoor military facilities and in most private-sector national healthcare systems.

The legislation would prohibit smoking in any VHA facility. Under this legislation, smoking would be banned inside VHA facilities immediately and outside VHA facilities within five years.

VA provides a variety of smoking cessation resources for veterans looking to quit smoking, including medications, counseling and online support on VA's website and mobile apps. The department also offers free over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy medications to its employees.

The Message:

- The health and well-being of our nation's heroes should always come first.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke puts veteran patients at unnecessary risk.
- This bill would require VHA facilities to be 100% smoke free within five years.
- This commonsense legislation would bring VA's smoking policies into the 21st Century, ensuring veteran patients receive the same considerations as patients in the private-sector.